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NEWS RELEASE

**MAN SENTENCED FOR BURNSVILLE
ATTEMPTED MURDER, BURGLARY AND ARSON**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that **Irvin Scott Cook**, age 21 from Prior Lake, was sentenced today to 29 1/2 years in prison by Judge Thomas Poch in connection with a random brutal assault and arson which occurred on May 11, 2008 in Burnsville. This sentence is an upward departure from Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines based upon the extreme violence of this attack. Cook was convicted May 17, 2010 by a Dakota County jury of Attempted Murder in the First Degree, Attempted Murder in the Second Degree, Arson in the First Degree, Burglary in the First Degree and Motor Vehicle Use Without Consent (all felonies).

The 52-year-old male owner of the townhome was violently attacked during this home invasion. He was stabbed three times in the face and head, a tip of the knife breaking off in his skull, and 17 times in the back. The invaders then started fires in eight locations, disabled the smoke alarm, turned on the gas burners on the stove and fled, leaving the victim to die. They also stole the victim's car when they left. Miraculously, the victim was able to get to his feet, run through the flames and escape from the building. He ran to a neighboring townhome and police were called. Burnsville police found blood matching **Shaquen Perril Whitfield**, age 22 of Prior Lake, at the crime scene and he led police to Cook. Whitfield, testified against Cook during Cook's trial.

Whitfield was also charged in connection with this matter. He previously pled guilty on June 22, 2009 to Attempted Murder in the First Degree, Arson in the First Degree and Burglary in the First Degree, and his sentencing is scheduled for June 16, 2011. A third party, **Lance Dwayne Wilkins**, age 23 of Prior Lake, was also initially charged in connection with this matter, but these charges were dismissed when later evidence showed he was not involved in this crime.

A detailed summary of the facts of this case are outlined in the criminal complaint and prior news releases at <http://services.co.dakota.mn.us/ComplaintSearch>.

Backstrom commented: "This was an extremely violent home invasion that almost claimed the life of a Burnsville resident. We seldom see random acts of violence like this and we are pleased to have brought those responsible to justice."

Backstrom praised the Burnsville Police Department and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for their work on this case.

If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4438.